

objective, TDI strongly suggests that the Commission measure up to its long history of commitment to people with disabilities as shown on the Commission's home page of its web site, where the FCC proudly displays activities in celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA").

There are 54 million Americans with disabilities, and the Commission's strategic plan ought to recognize their prominence by establishing a seventh goal, namely, to foster and encourage access to telecommunications, information services and media by all Americans, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing. Within this broad goal, TDI proposes the following specific objectives:

- Broadening the contribution base of the Telecommunications Relay Service Fund ("TRS Fund") and Universal Service Fund ("USF") to include all local and long distance services, whether they be telecommunications or information services, and whatever the technology or protocol used to provide the services, including wireless and Internet protocols.
- Continuing support toward making Video Relay Service ("VRS") and Internet Protocol Relay ("IP-Relay") service mandatory and supported by a permanent viable funding mechanism at both federal and state levels. Because both services are delivered through use of the Internet, local and long distance service are currently indistinguishable. However, discussion is underway to classify local and long distance calls as such, and thus these calls ought to be supported at both federal and state levels from broadened contribution bases.

- Ensuring that broadband services are offered to all Americans, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing, with technology-neutral accessibility, regardless of where the consumer is located.
- Ensuring access by people who are deaf and hard of hearing to information services without regard to the technology used for transmission or delivery.
- Offering opportunities for full participation on advisory committees as well as employment opportunities at the Commission to people who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Providing incentives and compliance audits for the telecommunications, information service, and media industries to ensure that their products and services are accessible to people with disabilities, including those who are deaf and hard of hearing.

TDI is concerned that people who are deaf and hard of hearing may be left behind as new services and technologies are deployed. Including access to telecommunications, information services and media by people with disabilities is a critical goal that ought to be adopted by the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

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